

The Builder.

No. CCCC.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1850.



ON Monday, the 4th, the Institute of British Architects re-assembled to open the season in their old locality, Lower Grosvenor-street. Endeavours have been made during the vacation to obtain more convenient meeting-rooms, but without effect. We would recommend to the attention of the Council a letter in another part of our present number, urging (as we have often before suggested) the erection of a *club-house* for literary, scientific, and artistic societies. We do not see any difficulties in the way of such an undertaking that could not be surmounted: the Government, too, ought to assist it, and would probably do so if it were brought before them by the proper parties in a proper manner.

We are anxious to see the Institute aid in the advancement of the art and its professors even more than it now does, to which end the leading members of the profession should attend and put their shoulders to the wheel. Papers and discussions touching the *live* things of the day should be encouraged: the architect's right position should here be asserted; the difficulties which beset him should here be combatted; and his doubts should here be resolved. The opening meeting of the session might be made an event, and we should be glad to find one of the leading members on these occasions placing before the Society, and through that, the public, a general view of such questions as may at the time be occupying the mind of the profession; enunciating his own opinions, and inducing the expression of those of others.

In the absence of the President, Earl de Grey, on Monday, Mr. Fowler, V.P. took the chair, and congratulated the society on their position after fourteen years' existence. The usefulness of the new session, he said, would depend wholly on the members themselves: to them the council must look for papers, with which at present they were not well provided. The chairman also alluded to the coming Exhibition as an event which could not fail to bring to this country a large number of their corresponding members, and give an opportunity for the display of good feeling. The council had under its consideration arrangements for the advantage of their expected visitors, which would, doubtless, receive the sanction of the members generally when brought before them.

Professor Donaldson, in proposing a vote of thanks for works presented during the recess, was good enough to allude to the letter

* The following letter refers to the present rooms, and shows the opinion that exists concerning them:—"I will venture to affirm that there is not in London a worse ventilated or more ill-arranged room in its general appointments for the purpose of a general meeting than that at present occupied by the Institute. As far as ventilation is concerned, there are neither means of ingress for fresh air, nor egress for foul or vitiated air (or if such exist, they are upon such a scale as to be wholly insufficient); nor are the products of the combustion of the gas carried off the consequence is, that the strength and heat are insupportable. Seats without backs, and so arranged as to take the maximum of space with the minimum of convenience, afford some faint notion of the arrangement, or rather the entire want of it. Should you succeed in your struggle for a seat, it is very problematical how you may get out (fortunately not without making considerable stir). I would suggest, therefore, if it be the intention to retain the apartments in Grosvenor-street,—to throw the two rooms into one, and take in the lobby, by means of iron girders and windows,—to have fixed seats with backs, to hold not more than four, and radiating, if possible,—the back seats to be raised. This, with some system of ventilation, would contribute much to the comfort and health of the members generally."

R. L. BRIDGES.

on the improvement of the Lord Mayor's Show, which has already appeared in our pages, as likely to lead to the introduction of more taste and greater meaning into these pageants. At Munich, in Belgium, and at other places abroad, he said, the public processions furnished representations and emblems of all the local trades as well as the arts and sciences, and he trusted that hereafter in England the pageants of the 9th of November would become a historical record of the times, and enlist public feeling in the cause of art. The Lord Mayor elect was a man of great public spirit, and it was a subject of congratulation to find that he was about to take the first step towards divesting "the Lord Mayor's Show" of its hitherto unmeaning character.—Allusion was also made to a work by Herr Semper, illustrative of the Theatre at Dresden, which contains several noble apartments, and is intended to be used for public fêtes.

A letter was read from Mr. Octavius Hansard, dated Cremona, stating that Signor Miglioranza, of Vicenza, was about to send to England a series of drawings of the innumerable fine remains of a Roman theatre, recently discovered there. "These fragments, and the mass of building remaining, are so perfect, that he has, upon pretty sure foundation, made drawings of a restoration. I may mention (continues the writer), that amongst the fragments is an Ionic cap, the volutes of which are not cut; but upon one of the faces is distinctly marked the method of turning them, which appears to be upon a different principle than we have hitherto known."

Mr. James Bell read a paper "On the Remains of the Architecture of the Roman Provinces," the object of which was to point out as worthy of study the large number of works left by the Romans in various parts of the world, which, though not so pure in style as those in Rome, offer many points of great beauty and interest. The remains in Treves, the monuments at St. Remi and Igel, and the buildings in the south of France, Nîmes especially, were described. The well-known *Maison Carrée*, at the latter place, is more perfect than any temple in Rome. The amphitheatre here is of such a plan, that every pillar has one acute and one obtuse angle, so that the science of stone-cutting was much more called upon than in the Coliseum. At Nîmes the restorations now going on are made by chemical means to resemble the old parts, so that care is necessary, when measuring and drawing, to discriminate. The Roman works in Spain are numerous: they suffered, as a matter of course, from the French armies, who appear, strangely enough, to have done all the mischief in their power to works of art. Africa contains many specimens of Roman work. The buildings of this period in Egypt are usually neglected. Palestine affords a rich harvest of Roman remains, particularly Palmyra and Balbec. In Asia Minor, he said, much yet remains to be investigated.

Mr. Tite fully concurred as to the value of this class of works for study, but more so as to the importance of studying the works of the best periods of classic architecture. Unfortunately, nothing was now thought of but mediocrity: all else was neglected. He wished that the Institute could do something to restore the ancient and better taste. Every young architect should study the ruins of Rome: he would maintain that a thoroughly good architect could not be made without distinct study of ancient art.

Mr. Donaldson, speaking of the extent to which the Romans, whom he regarded as benefactors of mankind, had diffused art wherever they acquired dominion, said it was to be regretted that there was no work, worthy of being named, illustrating the Roman remains in England. It should be a national undertaking.

A member, with reference to Roman works in our country, directed attention to the excavations commenced at Lyme, commonly called Stutfall Castle, in Kent, and expressed regret that a Pompeii should lie at our feet, and, for want of funds, remain entombed.

Mr. C. H. Smith (returning to Balbec) expressed a doubt as to the dependence that could be placed on Wood and Dawkins's work on the ruins of that place, particularly as to the ornament. He saw the original sketches some years ago, and they were so small and so slight that much was necessarily left for the imagination.

Mr. Scoles said he would not speak as to the book, but he had studied the ornament at Balbec, and it was as fine as in the best buildings of Rome.

We add a list of all who were present at the meeting. Of the Fellows, there were Messrs. T. L. Donaldson, C. Fowler, C. G. Nelson, G. Bailey, T. H. Wyatt, J. J. Scoles, C. Mayhew, S. Wood, J. T. Knowles, J. Bell, G. Godwin, J. J. Cole, W. J. Donthorne, D. Brandon, J. Tarring, G. O. Leicester, G. Mair, T. Smith, H. Roberts, J. W. Papworth, W. P. Griffith, J. Thomson, T. Bury, and W. Tite. Of the Associates,—Messrs. G. B. Williams, J. Gilson, C. Henman, W. Beck, R. Forester, W. Wright, G. Judge, A. R. Dobson, F. W. Porter, H. Oliver, C. J. Eddrup, A. Green, J. M. Lockyer, C. H. Howell, J. F. Wadmore, E. J. Kelly, N. Randall, A. J. Baker, J. Clayton, J. Norton, G. Vulliamy, E. Falkner, T. Y. Kimpton, and J. Ferguson.

The visitors were,—Messrs. C. Fowler, jun., J. B. Hewitt, J. T. Smith, R. Nicholson, J. B. Lockyer, R. Smyth, J. D. Wyatt, W. Roe, W. M. Teulon, S. Derby, J. Thorpe, J. E. Jones, R. Cole, E. W. Brayley, G. H. Knowles, N. Smith, C. R. Dillon, H. Downall, W. Norris, R. L. Beck, S. Godwin, T. Gardiner, G. Hepburn, F. Whyte, C. H. Smith, B. Fletcher, E. C. Robins, E. T. Parria, G. Sibbey, C. Backhoffner, T. J. Goodman, L. Cubitt, J. Wilks, A. Cole, T. D. Dighton, F. C. Wither, W. Scargill, E. Wilson, C. H. Purday, W. Papworth, G. Cooper, T. Robinson, T. H. Willson, E. E. Scott, J. S. Donaldson, H. Hoopl, F. Edwan, J. Lhamy, W. W. Lloyd, Jacob Bell, Herr G. Semper, and Dr. Dickson.

THE CAUSES AND CURE OF "SMOKY CHIMNEYS."

In commencing a series of papers on this subject, I may be permitted to devote a few lines in explanation of my reasons for doing so. It can scarcely be doubted that the more immediate cause of what are familiarly called "smoky" chimneys is the lamentable ignorance of the nature and principles of their action, which prevails to a very great extent. It is quite true that there are natural causes, but they are such as may be entirely controlled by the intelligence of man; and are only called into action by his ignorance of all save the merely practical part of his operations. An imperfect chimney ought therefore to form the exception instead of the rule, which it appears to do, even in this enlightened age; and it is with this conviction that I have allotted to myself the task of endeavouring to dispel the cloud of mystery that seems to envelope the existence of those most indispensable mechanical agents, chimneys.